

Governor's Proposed FY 23 Budget Adjustments
H.B. No. 5037 (COMM) AN ACT ADJUSTING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE
BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE 30, 2023

Appropriations Committee

February 17, 2022

My name is Ron Sparks, and I live in Hamden, CT. I'm writing to urge you to increase state funding for Connecticut's Independent Living Centers by \$1 Million dollars.

I have been employed by Independence Northwest, an Independent Living Center (ILC), since September 2008. During that time, I have worked as an Advocate for people with disabilities and as a Transition Coordinator Supervisor under the Money Follows the Person Demonstration Program (MFP). As a Transition Coordinator Supervisor, I have assisted in the transition of people with disabilities and elders from skilled or acute nursing facilities to a community residence more than 450 times.

The system that assumes many people with disabilities and elders can only live their lives in the safety of an institution still exists. The U.S. Supreme Court has deemed this policy discriminatory, and we are helping to give people options and choices that they previously have not had. Every consumer that I helped move into the community felt like a

captive and is now free to participate in the community in ways that medical professionals may not have agreed was possible. As we all age and require some assistance, making sure that we have these choices are a priority to me. I hope that you see the benefits as well.

The average cost in community long-term care of consumers is 30 percent less compared to what was paid to nursing facilities. These savings can carry on for many years. Without support coming from the State Independent Living Center funds, these people would be in jeopardy of returning to institutions, which means an increased cost to the state. This program is saving the tax dollars that my neighbors and I pay. Fully funding Connecticut's 5 Independent Living Centers makes financial sense.

Please support increasing the budgeted funds to these organizations. This investment is saving the state dollars now and will continue to do so in the future. Not only will you be making a sound fiscal decision, but you will also be showing your support for many of our fellow citizens to live life with the freedom and independence that they deserve.

Respectfully,

Ronald Sparks

